INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

SECRET

EXCISE 002075

1967 APR 4 AM 2 44

VZCZCMJA999JIA463
RR RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 2205@ 0940730
ZNY SSSSS
R 040542Z APR 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
STATE GRNC
BT
S E C R E T SAIGON 2205@

EXDIS

SUBJECT: THIEU OR KY

1. THE QUESTION OF THE MILITARY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT REMAINS UNRESOLVED, BUT THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THIS KEY ISSUE MAY NOW BE COMING TO A HEAD. THE GENERALS ARE REPORTED BY SEVERAL SOURCES TO HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE. [redacted] INDICATE THAT KY AGAIN TOOK THE LINE THAT THE DECISION IS UP TO THIEU, WHILE THIEU SAID THAT HE NEEDS MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT THE MATTER.

2. ACCORDING TO BRIG. GENERAL FREUND, GENERAL CAO VAN

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 2205@ S E C R E T
VIEN HAS INDICATED THAT THIEU SUBSEQUENTLY LET IT BEKNOWN INDIRECTLY THAT HE WANTS TO BE SELECTED AS THE MILITARY CANDIDATE. KY, ACCORDING TO FREUND, IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS BACK DOOR DECISION, AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE SAID TO BE IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO LINE UP ALL THE CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS TO BACK HIS CANDIDACY. ACCORDING TO FREUND, VIEN, GENERAL LE NGUYEN KPANG AND GENERAL NGUYEN DUC THANG ARE ORGANIZING THIS EFFORT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FIFTY DIVISION COMMANDER PHAM NGOC THUAN (WHO MAY BE REMOVED SOON), VIEN CLAIMS THAT ALL THE GENERAL OFFICERS IN I AND III CORPS NOW SUPPORT KY. THE OFFICERS IN III CORPS FOLLOW THANG'S LEAD. FOURTH CORPS COMMANDER NGUYEN VAN MANH IS ON THE FENCE, THOUGH HE

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Zuber DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

SAIGON 2205, 4-457 POL 14 VIET S
XR POL 15-1 VIET S

UNCLASSIFIED

IS BELIEVED TO FAVOR THIEU. HOWEVER, HIS THREE DIVISION COMMANDERS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN LINED UP FOR KY: NGUYEN VAN MINH AND NGUYEN VIET THANH WILL FOLLOW VIEN, AND LAM QUANG THI WILL GO WITH THANG. THE SECOND CORPS REMAINS A QUESTION MARK. THIEU IS SUPPORTED BY GENERAL DANG VAN QUANG.

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 22050 S E C R E T
3. COMMENT: VIEN'S VIEWS ARE PRESUMABLY COLORED BY HIS REPORTED SYMPATHY FOR KY. HE IS PROBABLY ALSO FULLY AWARE THAT HIS REMARKS WILL BE REPORTED, AND HE MAY HAVE SHAPED THEM ACCORDINGLY. WHILE THE SITUATION IS VERY UNCERTAIN, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IF THE GENERALS WERE POLLED, THIU MIGHT WELL HAVE MORE VOTES THAN KY. CLEARLY, VIEN IS LEAKING TO FREUND IN THE HOPE THAT THE U.S. WILL CUT THE GORDIAN KNOT FOR THEM. AS I HAVE OFTEN TOLD THEM, THIS IS ONE OF THE PAINFUL ASPECTS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY MUST HANDLE THEMSELVES. LODGE
GP-3
BT

UNCLASSIFIED